



Clarence Thomas warns against 'destroying our institutions,' defends the Supreme Court

BY CELINE CASTRONUOVO - 09/16/21 08:45 PM EDT

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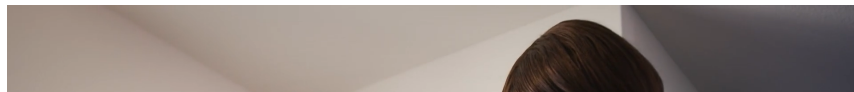
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Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas on Thursday warned against "destroying our institutions because they don't give us what we want, when we want it," arguing that the high court must remain independent from political polarization.

In an address to more than 800 students at the University of Notre Dame, Thomas said that the country has "gotten to the point where we're really good at finding something that separates us," according to [The Washington Post](#).

Thomas, the longest-serving justice and a member of the court's conservative wing, also pushed back on criticism that Supreme Court justices are aiming to promote their own political agendas in their decisions.

"I think the media makes it sound as though you are just always going right to your personal preference. So if they think you are antiabortion or something personally, they think that's the way you always will come out," Thomas, who is Catholic, explained.

"They think you're for this or for that. They think you become like a politician," he continued. "That's a problem. You're going to jeopardize any faith in the legal institutions."

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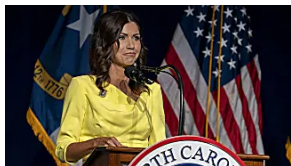
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When asked at Thursday's event if his Catholic faith has been at conflict with some of the legal questions that have come before the court, he responded, "that's not the role of a judge."

"You do your job and you go cry alone," he added, according to [The Associated Press](#).

He also criticized some judges who he argued are "venturing into areas we should not have entered into" by appearing to taking on roles as legislators or politicians.

"The court was thought to be the least dangerous branch and we may have become the most dangerous," Thomas said, according to the AP. "And I think that's problematic."

According to the Post, the George H.W. Bush-nominated justice said that while the high court has some flaws, justices do not rule based on "personal preferences," adding that the country's leaders should not "allow others to manipulate our institutions when we don't get the outcome that we like."

His remarks come after the Supreme Court [received intense pushback](#) this month for declining to block a controversial Texas law that bans abortions after a fetal heartbeat is detected, which can occur as early as six weeks into pregnancy.

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Thomas was among the majority in the 5-4 decision to reject an emergency request to prevent the law from taking effect, citing procedural complexities. He also noted that the decision did not resolve "serious questions" about the constitutionality of the Texas law.

The court in its upcoming term is set to review a Mississippi law that bans abortion after 15 weeks, with Republicans and anti-abortion groups hoping that the 6-3 conservative majority on the high court could lead to a decision overturning the landmark 1973 ruling of *Roe v. Wade* that legalized abortion nationwide.

Thomas has called on the court to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, and in a 1992 decision was among the four justices who ruled in favor of doing so.

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